

## Virtual Hortlandia 2020

### Fancy Fronds

[www.fancyfronds.com](http://www.fancyfronds.com)

This week Joanne Fuller talked with Judith Jones at Fancy Fronds and edited the conversation for this article.

#### *Judith, what are some of your favorite plants?*

Obviously, ferns, but like all plant geeks, it is easier to list the plants I don't like than list the ones I like. I like everything from trees to mosses. I am partial to Victorian fern cultivars--soft shield ferns (*Polystichum setiferum*) and lady ferns (*Athyrium filix-femina*). There are many cultivars in so many shapes and forms with sometimes minor variations that make them all beautiful.

#### *Don't you have international connections for your fern collecting?*

I am very very fortunate to have connected with the British Pteridological Society which has been around for over 100 years. These folks are just as passionate about ferns as I am. We exchange information and fern spores---allowing me to grow rare species and cultivars. I'm also in touch with Dutch growers including the largest Dutch fern grower. They are very interested in the provenance and correct labeling of ferns which many large growers are not.

#### *Fancy Fronds has been a part of the HPSO Plant Sales from the beginning, what were those early sales like?*

The HPSO plant sale started because people from Portland came to the Arboretum sale in Seattle and wanted to have that type of sale close to home. Those first years at the Washington County Fairgrounds, the floor was tarmac, and when you reached down to pick up plants you could smell the animals that had been housed in the buildings for the county fair. In the beginning, we were in one room at the Fairgrounds, then the whole building, then we got so crowded we couldn't fit in those buildings anymore, and HPSO moved the sale to the Expo Center. It's always been a nice way for us to connect with people from Oregon, including other growers. I always learn a lot from our customers at the sales.

#### *What plants look good right now in the nursery?*

This is a great time of year to buy and plant ferns. Some ferns are most beautiful in Spring as their croziers unfurl, and they reveal their brightest colors. For cold hardy ferns, I would recommend--*Adiantum venustum*, *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum' & 'Ghost', and *Polystichum setiferum*. I always want to help customers find the right ferns for their gardens. The catalogue on our website is a great resource for information on all the ferns we grow. If they want more help, people can email me pictures of ferns from their gardens. Then I can help identify the plant as well as help choose additional ferns to complement what they are already growing. People can also email me pictures of their garden area, and I can suggest ferns that would be suitable.

#### *Can Fancy Fronds ferns grow as houseplants?*

Many ferns make excellent houseplants. In the catalog, we list some ferns that will only grow indoors in the Northwest. We also have ferns that can grow outside in the summer and should be taken in or protected in the winter. Ferns are also great plants for people who just have a patio or small outside space. Good frost tender ferns to buy right now are *Adiantum raddianum* 'Brillantelse' and *Davallia mariesii* ssp. *stenolepis* (sold as *Davallia trichomanoides*).

***Can customers visit your nursery right now and what is that like?***

Customers can either mail order at [www.fancyfronds.com](http://www.fancyfronds.com) or they can email an order to us for pick-up at the nursery. We have some larger specimens of ferns that we don't ship, so that is one advantage of pick-up. When people come for plant pick-up, we are in the country at the base of Stevens Pass, Washington-- the property is planted with forest understory plants and folks can wander around. The plants in the garden aren't labeled, but visitors can take photos with their phone, text them to me and I can i.d. plants for them.